

The

# Islamic Review

Edited by KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN, B.A., LL.B.

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نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

# THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

VOL. X. RAMAZAN 1940 A.H. MAY 1922. No. 5

## CONTENTS.

A Fraternal Group to Welcome the Afghan Minister	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Notes .. .. .	194
Address to the Afghan Minister .. .. .	199
For the Consideration of the Paris Conference. By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN .. .. .	204
The Institution of Fast. By MUHAMMAD YAKUB KHAN .. .. .	209
The Secret of Existence. By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN .. .. .	212
The Sufi's Diary. Messages from Spirits and a Message from the Supreme Spirit. .. .. .	220
The Prophet as a Reformer. By ABDULLAH RAIF MASHRÛK .. .. .	226
Christianity in her Own Land .. .. .	229
Holy Anecdotes. By BABAR .. .. .	230
Topics of Muslim Interest .. .. .	233
What is Islam? .. .. .	239

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## NOTES

**The Afghan Minister in the Mosque.**

Sirdar Abdul Hadi Khan, the first Afghan Minister, visited the Mosque on March 12th, where he received an address of welcome from the members of the British Muslim Society. His Excellency, with his suite, reached the Mosque at 12 noon, when he was received by Lord Headley, Professor Léon, his Excellency Kazim Pasha (the President of the Palestine Arab Delegation), Messrs. Habibullah Lovegrove, Khalid Sheldrake, Bashir Pickard, B.A., and the Imam. Some of the daily press reports given elsewhere with the Address and the Reply thereto makes it unnecessary for us to give any detailed account of the event here. After Zohar prayers, luncheon was served in Sir Salar Jung Memorial House, when oriental dishes were served and appreciated. The Sunday Sermon was given by the Imam, and after afternoon tea His Excellency and others left the Mosque after passing a very happy day.

**The Paris Conference.**

Elsewhere in these pages we publish an instructive memorandum by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, the Imam of the Mosque, Woking, to the "Paris Near East Conference," on the question of the penalty of apostasy in Islam. "The Protection of non-Muslim Minorities" has ever proved a ready pretext with the Western Powers for the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. This time, it was apprehended, this old, old story might repeat itself in a new but no less clever form. That apostasy is met with capital punishment in Islam—only one of the numerous misrepresentations on the part of the Christian propagandist—might afford the Christian diplomat a fresh handle to exploit and carry out his anti-Turkish designs. We trust the illuminating verdict of a theologian of the Khwaja's standing—



an authority on Islam, universally recognized throughout the Muslim World—based as it is on the incontestable authority of the Holy Qur-án, will go a long way to enlighten the Allies' Foreign Ministers, now joining their heads in Paris, on the point, and hush up all such murmurs. The memorandum, in the form of printed leaflets, was sent to Paris and to others concerned as a timely notice before the deliberation at Paris began, and we hope it must have received due consideration.

### **The Month of Fasting**

Begins this year with the 28th day of April, and ends on the 27th day of May. Some necessary directions as to fasting have been given in these pages elsewhere, and we issue our present number on the 20th of April to enable our Muslim readers in these Isles to avail themselves of them.

### **Joint Number of the Review.**

Our next will be the joint number for June and July, appearing some time after the Month of Fasting, as the whole of our staff will partially be on holiday in the said month.

I'd Bairam, Kotchak—our Festival of thanksgiving for our being able to observe the Month of Fasting—will, as usual, be celebrated in the premises of the Mosque, Woking. Our brethren in Faith, and friends and sympathizers in this land, are cordially invited to join us in the festival, which this year will be on Sunday, the 28th day of May.

### **Jonah and Solomon on Picture Show.**

Almost every cinema picture programme contains a comic part to entertain the spectators. These days it has fallen to the lot of an ancient prophet of God to form the object of public amusement in some of the Metropolitan picture palaces. Poor Jonah! His adventures into the belly of the whale has been made to furnish the requisite laughing-

stock. The picture is full of comic touches, and the object of the adventure was, after all, to get whalebone for the corset. The vulgarity of the taste exceeds its limit when "humble walkers with the Lord" become its target. Even the mighty Solomon has not been able to escape this appalling spirit of blasphemy. In all his earthly and heavenly glory he has been dragged down to the picture halls of London to serve as an evening pastime for the Cockney. His love affair with the Queen of Sheba, in all its filthy details—a scene so characteristic of the sons of "civilization" rather than of a son of God, as every prophet undoubtedly is—is displayed and enjoyed without the slightest moral shudder.

These stories are no doubt based on Old Testament record, but it affords no justification for upholding to public ridicule these true and noble messengers from the Lord, who in their day did their bit of service to humanity. Common decency would dictate their expunging even from the pages of the Bible; but to show them off like this is extremely deplorable. Has Christendom lost all respect for religion? The Church is more to be blamed than the laity for losing her influence in moulding religious consciousness. A Muslim cannot even entertain the idea of a thing like that.

### Our Activities.

Friday sermons and Sunday lectures were held as usual, both at the Mosque and the Muslim Prayer House, London, with considerable effect. Of these a word as to Mr. Arthur Field's lecture on "Islam and Scepticism" may be of interest, inasmuch as the speaker struck quite an original note. Referring to the works of various mystical poets, such as Umar Khayyam and Ibn-ul-Ma'adi, which are one unbroken outpouring of condemnation against religious observances, he drove at the point that under the cloak of religion they were all his fellow brothers



## NOTES

in scepticism. When, however, he was told that the selfsame poets, whom he claimed as his own, were in fact the very best specimens of Islam, that their condemnation was directed at the hypocritical observance of rituals, unaccompanied by a corresponding righteousness in workaday life, and that the Holy Qur-án is equally unsparing in its denunciation of empty ritualism, he acknowledged it as a valuable addition to his information. Mr. Arthur Field is the Hon. Secretary of the Anglo-Ottoman Society, a sceptic by profession, but to us a prospective Muslim of the noblest stamp. He is a sincere admirer of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and a fellow brother.

### League of Nations (Religious Section).

Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din addressed a large gathering at Catford Town Hall, at the invitation of the Lewisham League of Nations Branch, the subject being "Islam and the League." The Khwaja, in his own convincing tone, impressed upon the audience, on the authority of the Holy Qur-án, to which he made frequent reference, that Islam was the only religion that held out the hand of fellowship to all other sister religions. Belief in all the world prophets, which must form the very keystone of the "League of Faiths," if it was to be a success, was enjoined by Islam, and Islam alone. Likewise, Islam pulled down all artificial barriers of colour, race, birth, and position, and inculcated a spirit of fraternity among the heterogeneous elements of human society. "Was the Khwaja a Muslim?" "What about the slaves?" "What about the Mahdi who would put the infidels to the sword?" were some of the astonished interpellations here and there. Surely they could not reconcile their conception of Islam—a barbarous faith of fanaticism, bloodshed, slavery, and what not—with the lovely picture appealing to the head as well as heart of

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

man, drawn by Khwaja. Little wonder, therefore, if they wondered whether the Khwaja was at all speaking of Islam, and whether he was at all a Muslim. So marvellous was the impression.

### **Æolian Hall Lecture.**

Another and a far more splendid and uplifting address was that delivered at the Æolian Hall to a vast Spiritualist gathering of over a thousand. The subject was "The Goal of Humanity," and a more exalted one befitting the occasion could not have been chosen. The preliminary hymns, so characteristic of all Spiritualist assemblies, saturated the whole atmosphere with a tinge of the Divine. Then followed breathless silence, and you would have thought as though that spacious hall was under the control of spirits, and those seated on the cushioned chairs were so many denizens of the other world. The scores of covered and coloured lamps, dimly shedding their lurid light as if anxious not to disturb with their glare the perfect calm reigning there, added a halo of sanctity and solemnity to the scene. In such an unearthly atmosphere, there at the farthest corner, on the magnificent platform arose the Khwaja, tall, stately, and perhaps soaring in the realms of Islamic spirituality. "Imbue yourselves with Divine attributes," came forth the loud, yet sweet, flow of his oration,—the message of Islam to mankind. And as he went on displaying the lustrous gems of Islam one after another the assembly was all eyes and ears, listening with spellbound attention to the Higher Spiritualism of Islam. It took much longer than usual, yet when the Khwaja resumed his seat many were sorry that he had to finish. The chairman, in the course of his concluding speech, acknowledged with gratitude the uplifting influence of the address on the whole assembly.

M. Y. KHÂN.



## ADDRESS TO THE AFGHAN MINISTER

## ADDRESS TO THE AFGHAN MINISTER

To

HIS EXCELLENCY SARDAR ABDUL HADI KHAN

*Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary of  
H.I.M. The Amir of Afghanistan to the Court of St. James's.*

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

We, the members of the British Muslim Society, desire to extend to your Excellency a sincere and fraternal welcome on your arrival in our country.

Your Excellency's appointment as the first Afghan Minister accredited to the Court of St. James's, not only marks the assumption by Afghanistan of the rightful place which her sagacity, patience, and indomitable valour have won for her among the nations of the World, but seems, also, to us, to herald the dawning of a new era of mutual co-operation, understanding and goodwill between Islam and Christendom.

It is our earnest prayer that, in the light of that new era, the difficulties that to-day are harassing Islam and the Khilafat may be speedily dispersed, in the only manner acceptable to Muslims of every race; and that the integrity of the Turkish Empire, with the authority of H.I.M. the Sultan as Khalif and Guardian of the Holy Places, may be fully re-established and maintained. We pray that it may not yet be too late to undo much of the mischief that has been wrought by the blunders of the past few years, and are one with, as we honestly believe, the vast majority of our countrymen, in resenting the misguided action of Great Britain (in whose Empire Muslims outnumber Christians) in lending support—moral or otherwise—to Greece against Islam, when bare justice—apart from policy—forbids it.

We hear constantly of the anti-Christian feeling that is said to prevail among Muslims, but in actual experience have met with no sign or trace of its existence. On the other hand, indications of anti-Muslim feelings among Christians are plentiful—even in the utterances of statesmen—and it is such prejudice, unthinking and based on ignorance, that is responsible for a public opinion that is too often mistaken and misled.

The Muslim Mission in England has, since its inception, done much to remove this prejudice and to spread the truth—to place the true doctrines of Islam in their purity and beauty before the minds of thinking men and women; and, though the work be, of necessity, slow, it is, perhaps for that reason, thorough. We, many of whom owe to the Mission our conversion to Islam and the revelation of that light which illumines reason and faith alike, can

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

testify to the value and extent of the work that has been accomplished ; and to our own feeling of undying personal gratitude to the large-mindedness, unselfishness and zeal which have inspired and carried on its activities, we are bound to add our sense of the service it is rendering to the cause of the true religion, in spreading, by precept and example, the Islamic spirit of tolerance, sympathy and goodwill. We also take this opportunity of expressing our deep gratitude to Her Highness the Begum of Bhopal, to the manifold munificence of whose Muslim State we owe the beautiful Mosque in this Country.

It is for Muslims the world over to emulate—each as Allah has enabled him—the example set by the Mission in England ; and we pray that Afghanistan, in the person of your Excellency, may not hesitate to avail herself of the unique occasion that is now before her of representing the true spirit of Islam in the Councils of the World.

We remain,

Your Excellency's sincere Brethren in Islam,

THE MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH MUSLIM SOCIETY.

THE SHAHJAHAN MOSQUE, WOKING.

12th March, 1922.

REPLY OF H.E. SARDAR ABDUL HADI KHAN, THE AFGHAN  
MINISTER.

MY LORD,

Permit me to thank you most heartily for the cordial welcome you have so kindly extended to me, in the name of the British Muslim Society, as your brother in Islam. I am also much impressed with and feel thankful for the genuine fraternal sentiments concerning the Muslim Power of Afghanistan, to which you have given expression in your address.

I quite realize the significance of the call of the Holy Qur-án to the People of the Book : " Say : O followers of the Book ! come to an equitable proposition between us and *you* that we shall not serve any but Allah and (that) we shall not associate aught with Him, and (that) some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah ; but if they turn back, then say : Bear witness that we are Muslims " (Ch. iii. ver. 63), to which you have so pertinently referred in your address. The call aims at the establishment of cordial relations between the Islamic and Christian worlds. This is, to my mind, the one principle that affords a common meeting-ground, to bring about a community of thought and feeling between the two great influences of the world. Hence I believe that this should be the watchword of every ambassador from Muslim countries to Christian nations.

I hold that a true conception of religion is the sole



## ADDRESS TO THE AFGHAN MINISTER

means of removing international or interracial difficulties, and establishing true peace in the world.

It is my deep-rooted conviction that Islam is the one religion that can bind different peoples together in the bond of affection such as exists between brother and brother. The history of Islam teems with striking instances of such fraternization of discordant elements in human society; and to this the Holy Qur-án refers, when it says: "And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together, and be not disunited, and remember the favour of Allah on you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts so by His favour you became brethren."

It is a matter of deep satisfaction to me to know that our English brethren also share the political creed of the rest of the Islamic world. I am impressed to find that your hearts, at one with the Afghan, the Indian, the Turk, the Arab, the Egyptian, the Moor, the Javanese and the Tartar, are also throbbing with the same universal sentiment on the vital question of the Khilafat and its present defenders. If the Islamic and Christian worlds are really anxious to secure abiding peace, let them seek it through better mutual understanding. It is necessary, in the interest of a lasting peace, that they should respect one another's religious susceptibilities, not interfering with the sacred institutions of one another, but showing all veneration towards them. In a word, they should make it a point to refrain from anything that may tend to injure the other's cherished sentiments. Such a fair dealing must inevitably lead to an appreciation of one another's cult and the promotion of mutual goodwill and amity.

I cannot conclude without expressing my deep appreciation of the services of the workers of the Muslim Mission to the cause of Islam. I need hardly say that with the noble ideas and pure sentiments that inspire their efforts, its ultimate success is a foregone conclusion. It is a matter of special pleasure to me to have met to-day those whose hearts are alive with such pure emotions. It is a spiritual delight to me to see before me the hearts and eyes that, perceiving the light of Truth, had the courage of conviction to accept it and to find in it their true felicity and mental satisfaction. For all this we must feel grateful to the Almighty Allah and humbly implore Him to enable us to do our utmost in the promotion of this cause with which, I am sure, is bound up the reformation of the world.

In the end, I offer you once more my heartfelt gratitude for your kindness.

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# ISLAMIC REVIEW

## MOSLEMS AND THE EMPIRE

### AFGHAN MINISTER ON THE QUESTION OF THE KHALIFAT

The Minister of Afghanistan paid an informal visit to the Moslem Mosque at Woking yesterday, when he received an address of welcome from the British Muslim Society. His Excellency Sardar Abdul Hadi Khan was received by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, Imam of the Mosque, and among those present to welcome him were Lord Headley, President of the Society, Prince Faiz of Manawadar, the Princes Sadiq and Aziz of Mangrol, and the President and members of the Palestine Arab Delegation.

The address of welcome, which was read by Lord Headley, referred to the difficulties harassing Islam and the Khalifat to-day, and expressed the hope that they would be dispersed in the only manner acceptable to Moslems, and that the integrity of the Turkish Empire, with the Sultan as Khalif and Guardian of the Holy Places, might be fully established and maintained. Members of the Society were in agreement with the vast majority of their countrymen in resenting the misguided action of Great Britain in lending support to Greece against Islam, when bare justice forbade it.

The Minister replied that it was a matter of deep satisfaction for him to know that their English brethren shared the political creed of the rest of the Islamic world. He was impressed to find that their hearts were throbbing with the same universal sentiment on the vital question of the Khalifat and its present defenders. If the Islamic and Christian worlds really desired abiding peace, let them seek it through better mutual understanding.—*Morning Post*, March 18th.

### WHERE EAST AND WEST DO MEET

#### BRITISH MOSLEMS GREET THE AFGHAN MINISTER

Devout Moslems from all parts of England joined the picturesque pilgrimage to the Mohammedan mosque at Woking to-day to accord an Islamic welcome to his Excellency Sardar Abdul Hadi Khan, the newly appointed Afghan Minister to the Court of St. James's, and an orthodox follower of Islam.

The outer court of the mosque was filled with pilgrims of all nations and all colours—Turks, Egyptians, Indians, and Europeans—and a considerable number of young English girl converts to Islam, chiefly resident in Woking.

The Afghan Minister with three of his secretaries arrived soon after noon, wearing formal morning dress and the grey and black astrakhan fez. They were met by the Imam of the Mosque, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, attired in his full Eastern dress—flowing robes and a multi-coloured turban.

#### SPEECH IN PERSIAN

The Imam with great ceremony conveyed the Minister to the steps of the outer court of the Mosque. Here Lord Headley,



## ADDRESS TO THE AFGHAN MINISTER

the Moslem peer, supported by two Indian princes, read an address of welcome to his Excellency, who replied to the address in Persian, with profuse apologies for his scanty English.

As the Imam flung out his arms and cried loudly, "Allah-u-Akbar," the pilgrims motioned their hands behind their ears to fling off the world, sank on their knees, and prostrated themselves, burying their foreheads in the dust. This was repeated several times, and Allah was adored in chants and prayers.

Sardar Abdul Hadi Khan, the new Afghan Minister, a thin, little, black-bearded man, with piercing dark eyes, is a native of Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. This is his first visit to London, and he laughingly admits his embarrassment concerning European dress and customs. He has not yet mastered the art of wielding English table cutlery, and he eats the modest lunch of curried rice set in his honour with considerable difficulty. —*Daily Express*, March 13th.

### AFGHAN MINISTER

#### BRITISH MUSLIMS' WELCOME

Muslims in England of all races, and especially members of the British Muslim Society, gave a welcome yesterday to the first Afghan Minister accredited to the Court of St. James's, who attended at the picturesque Shahjehan Mosque at Woking. Sardar Abdul Hadi Khan, who has recently arrived in this country, wore western dress with the astrakan fez, and with him were several of his suite. Assembled on the steps were Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, Imam of the Mosque, Princes Sadiq and Aziz of Mangrol, Prince Faiz Mohammed of Manawadar, Moussa Kazim Pasha, president of the Palestine Arab Delegation, with suite and members of that delegation, the Hon. Charles Allanson Winn, Mr. J. M. Lovegrove, and others, including many ladies.

Lord Headley, the president, read an address of welcome from the British Muslim Society, which declared that his Excellency's appointment as First Afghan Minister heralded the dawn of a new era of mutual co-operation, understanding, and goodwill between Islam and Christendom. It prayed that the difficulties that to-day harassed Islam may be speedily dispersed, and the integrity of the Turkish Empire and the authority of the Sultan as Khalif and Guardian of the Holy Places fully re-established and maintained, adding: "We pray that it may not yet be too late to undo much of the mischief that has been wrought by the blunders of the past few years, and are one with, as we honestly believe, the vast majority of our countrymen in resenting the misguided action of Great Britain (in whose Empire Muslims outnumber Christians) in lending support—moral or otherwise—to Greece against Islam, when bare justice—apart from policy—forbids it."

The Afghan Minister, who spoke in Persian, which was trans-

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

lated, said the call of the Qur-án aimed at the establishment of cordial relations between the Islamic and the Christian world. That one principle afforded a common meeting ground to bring about a community of thought and feeling between the two great influences of the world. It should be the watchword of every Ambassador from Muslim countries to Christian nations. The knowledge that their English brethren shared the political creed of the rest of the Islamic world was a matter of deep satisfaction to him. If the Islamic and Christian world were really anxious to secure abiding peace, let them seek it through mutual understanding.—*The Daily Telegraph*, March 13th.

A picturesque ceremony took place yesterday at the Woking, Surrey, Mosque, where Lord Headley, president of the British Moslem Society, read an address of welcome to Sirdar Abdul Hadi Khan, first Afghan Minister to Britain, on behalf of the 400 Moslems in this country. The Minister expressed his thanks in Persian.

In the address Lord Headley hoped that the integrity of the Turkish Empire, with the Sultan as guardian of the holy places [Mecca, Medina, and Bagdad], would be re-established. He deplored the action of Great Britain in lending support to Greece against Islam. Lord Headley also thanked the Begum of Bhopal, the only Moslem woman ruler in the world, to whom they owed "the beautiful mosque in this country."—*Daily Mail*, March 13th.

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## FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE PARIS CONFERENCE

### THE PENALTY OF APOSTASY IN ISLAM

"Surely (as for) those who believe then disbelieve, again believe and again disbelieve, then increase in disbelief, Allah will not forgive them nor guide them in the (right) path."—*QUR-AN*, iv. 137.

IF there existed any doubt as to the penalty of apostasy in Islam, and the fate of the apostate, the above quoted verse dispels it at once. It is clear and definite, leaving no room for discussion, requiring no comment. It speaks of one who embraces Islam and then forsakes it; who becomes a Muslim yet again, and yet again recants and becomes rooted in apostasy, while the latter part of the verse states the punishment which will be meted out to the apostate, which is that Allah will not forgive



## FOR THE PARIS CONFERENCE

him, neither will Allah guide him any more in the path of righteousness. The offence of apostasy, like deadly sin, is to be judged by God alone, and not by human agency. Unfortunately, the rôle played by the missionary propagandist in Europe in the last century has been largely delegated to the politician, and the orgy of political blunders already perpetrated, with the effect of alienating the Muslim world from British Rule is, by now, an open secret. Everyone knows that it is Phil-hellenism rather than any "dictates of humanity," which threatens the integrity of the Turkish dominion. Now that the question of the reconstruction of the Turkish Empire is under consideration by the "Near East" Conference in Paris, the "protection of minorities under the Turk" shibboleth may lead to many issues, of which one may very possibly turn on the penalty erroneously supposed to attach to apostasy in Islam; and a word or two on this subject would seem to be therefore not only advisable, but most necessary.

Muslims take their religion from the Qur-án and from the actions of the Prophet Muhammad, and these latter are only followed by way of practical explanation of the former. "My words cannot abrogate the words of God; but the words of God can abrogate mine." So says the Noble Prophet.

The sole test of authenticity to be applied to his own words is the Qur-án; and it is to the Qur-án therefore that we must look to discover the penalty for apostasy. The verse I have quoted makes no mention of any actual punishment in a material sense. A return to unbelief after belief is mentioned more than once, and neither death nor any other human punishment is so much as hinted at. In two other passages the Qur-án treats of apostasy, and in these the very word *Irtitad* has been used, which bears the technical significance of apostasy. One of them is the 54th verse of the fifth chapter, which I quote from Muhammad Ali's translation:—

"O you who believe! *whoever from among you turns back from his religion, then Allah will bring a people*, He shall love them and they shall love Him; lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers, they shall strive hard in Allah's way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer; this is Allah's grace, He gives it to whom He pleases, and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing."

The verse speaks of no penalty for the renegades from Islam, but tells by way of prophesy that apostasy will be followed by coming of a better people into the fold of Islam. In Chapter II, the concluding portion of verse 217 speaks thus of apostasy :

"And whoever of you turns back from his religion, *then he dies while an unbeliever*—these it is whose works shall go for nothing in this world, and the hereafter, and they are the inmates of the fire; therein they shall abide."

I append Sale's translation of the same verse :

"Whoever among you shall turn back from his religion, and die an infidel, their works shall be vain in this world, and the next; they shall be the companions of hell-fire, they shall remain therein for ever,"

And Rodwell's version is in nearly the same words. The penalty to the apostate is not death but, in the translation of Rodwell, "their works shall be fruitless in this world and in the next," and in the rendering of Sale, "their works shall be vain in this world and the next." Then comes the punishment in the life after death, "They shall be the companions of hell-fire." I do not find any other mention of apostasy in the Qur-án and certainly nothing to justify the suggestion that death is, or ever was, the penalty of apostasy in Islam. The misconstruction or misinterpretation of Islam seems, unfortunately, to have fallen to the lot of certain Christian writers, and in this verse the word *Fayamut* has given them their opportunity. Muhammad Ali translates it, "then he dies while an unbeliever"; Sale, "and die an infidel"; and Rodwell, "and die an infidel." But the Christian propa-



## FOR THE PARIS CONFERENCE

gandist has translated it "he shall be put to death." This is not only a gross misinterpretation on his part, but evinces, if intended sincerely, his utter ignorance of the Arabic language. Sale, whose maligning — Islam — tendencies are well known, could hardly have failed to make much of it if the verse had allowed him the least latitude.

In the days of the Prophet all the reliable records of his life are silent on the subject. There were many apostasies doubtless, but no one was punished, for it is, and has ever been, the watchword of Islam that there shall be "no compulsion in religion" (Ch. II. 256). We, however, read of the putting to death of the party of 'Ukl in our traditions, who, after professing Islam, feigned that the climate of Medina was insalubrious, and being told to go to the place where the herds of camels belonging to the State were grazed, murdered the keepers and drove the herds along with them. They were charged under the crime of murder and dacoity, for which the punishment of death has been provided in Ch. V. 33. This episode has generally been cited by the Qur-ánic commentators under the verse which ordains the death penalty for murder and dacoity; and there is no other case which can even be twisted to show that the punishment of death was ever inflicted on apostasy from Islam.

Reference may be made to wrong actions on the part of subsequent followers of Islam who assumed the garb of religion merely to further their political aims; but this is not peculiar to Muslims. Has not the modern politician most infelicitously compared the recent fighting in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem with the Crusades, and gone so far as to hail Salonika as the gate of Christianity? If Christianity is not responsible for the horrors of the Inquisition, before which the horrors of hell fade into insignificance, wrongs done by some few Muslim zealots, if done against the clear teachings of the Qur-án, cannot be

put to the account of Islam. The deliberators of the Paris Conference should bear in mind that if this supposed death penalty for apostasy in Islam is to be used as a pretext for tampering with the authority of the Sultan, it will amount to nothing more nor less than an uncalled-for attack on our religion. We take it as an insult and a slur on our religion, and the Phil-hellenists should think twice before they allow the question of apostasy to influence their decision. Let us have no more blunders. We Muslims do believe in freedom of conscience, and we do denounce the action of a Muslim Government even under which capital punishment is meted against apostasy. The Book which says, "All Muslims, Jews, Christians and Sabians who believe in God and the last day, and do good works, shall have their reward with their Lord" (Qur-án II. 59)—such cannot allow its followers to look with hatred towards Christians and Jews, no matter if they be so by birth or are renegades from Islam. Islam is the proverbial enemy of idolatry, the sworn foe of polytheism in every form. Yet millions of temples, pagodas and shrines, consecrated to numberless gods, goddesses and demi-gods, teeming with valuable golden and marble images and idols, have survived the most triumphant rule of Islam in India. They still possess the artistic beauty and sublimity of the ancient workmanship, and excite the wonder of the modern craftsman. Does not this fact speak highly of that largeness of soul which the holy texts have infused into the notorious breakers of idols? But where are the remains of our art and culture in places which were taken from us by the Christians of Spain?

KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN,  
*Imam of the Mosque, Woking.*



# THE INSTITUTION OF FAST

## THE INSTITUTION OF FAST

By MUHAMMAD YAKUB KHAN

SIDE by side with prayer, every revealed religion has been prescribing, from times immemorial, a course of fasting as a means of man's spiritual elevation. Prayer and Fasting are the two wings, so to speak, wherewith man uplifts himself from the low terrestrial depths of the flesh and soars high up in the celestial realms of spirituality. Both are calculated to bring out whatever good and beautiful lies embedded in the depths of human nature. Even to-day, we find the institution of fasting exists in almost all the surviving religions of yore. Brahmanism, Buddhism and Judaism have to this day conserved this key-stone of religion. Islam, like its elder sisters, also places the greatest emphasis on fasting.

Christianity of the day, however, alone stands conspicuous in having eliminated this all-important item of religion. Why should it have done so, in the face of the Gospel records showing that Jesus also spoke of it again and again as a means of soul-purification, passes our comprehension. When asked by his disciples why they could not cast out the devil, did not the Master reply : " This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and *fasting* " (Mark ix. 29) ?

Again, is it not clearly stated that Jesus fasted for forty days for self-elimination :

Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.

And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing : and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

As a matter of fact, all the four gospels repeatedly speak of fasting. And how could Jesus ignore the

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

importance of fast, a true observer of the Mosaic law as he was? He had not come to abrogate, but to fulfil the law (Matt. v. 7). His strong belief in fasting could not better be illustrated than by reference to Mark ix. 29, where he says :

And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

With Jesus a man could reach the height of spirituality by prayer and fasting. No doubt Jesus condemned the sort of prayer kept by the hypocritical Pharisees :

Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance : for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face ;

That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret : and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

But suchlike fasts are not fasts in the true sense of the word, and, like Jesus, Islam is also unsparing in its condemnation of hypocrisy.

Jesus in the above quotation teaches the true spirit in which fasting should be observed. One fails to find any justification whatsoever in the teaching of Jesus for the absolution of the Christian from fasting.

### TRUE SIGNIFICANCE OF FAST.

A line of discrimination must be drawn between fasting and starvation. That of the Pharisees' type, as denounced by Jesus, meant merely as an empty show, as a veneer to make one pass off as pious in the eyes of men, falls under the latter category. Voluntary and cheerful suppression of carnal cravings is of the very essence of a true fast. Abstinence from food and drink, by itself, does not constitute a fast, unless it should foster the true spirit in us. Accord-



## THE INSTITUTION OF FAST

ing to the teachings of Islam, every religious institution is pregnant with a deep underlying significance. Remove that essence, that kernel, and what is left in the form of ritual is an empty shell, a worthless husk. So is the case with fasting. Food and drink are the indispensable necessities of our life, and abstinence from them as such constitutes no virtue. It is only intended to serve as an ostensible symbol for what is the real object to inculcate. In abstaining from these legitimate means of self-gratification—food and drink honestly earned—we are in fact taught that we must never make use of what is illegitimate. In other words, when we voluntarily give up in obedience to Divine injunction what is perfectly right to use, how much more must we be on our guard against indulgence in what is wrong. We must abstain from everything improper and evil, whether in deed, word or thought. Let nothing foul and dirty pollute the clean sheet of our soul. Thus fasting is not merely abstinence from food and drink, but what is the true purpose, refraining from everything impure. Not only is the stomach to be deprived of some stuff, but every limb and joint must participate in the fast. The foot must not walk towards evil, the hand must not stretch towards it. The eye and the ear must be shut against it and let it not find entrance even into the pure precincts either of the head or of the heart. Such is a true fast as enjoined by Islam.

### HOW OBSERVED.

The fasting period in Islam extends each year over a full lunar month—the month of Ramazan, beginning this year with the 28th April and ending with the 27th May, both days inclusive. The duration of a single fast is from early dawn (an hour before sunrise) till sunset, during which time thorough abstinence from every sort of edible, drink and smoke is to be observed. Conjugal intercourse is also

disallowed during these hours. The interval between the two points—from sunset to an hour before sunrise—is exempt from all these restrictions. Thus food is taken an hour before dawn each day, which is called *Sahri*, from *sahr* (early morn), and again taken after sunset. Exact hours of sunrise and sunset can be ascertained from some paper, and the duration of a fast regulated accordingly.

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## THE SECRET OF EXISTENCE

By KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

(*Continued from p. 183.*)

THIS, in brief, is the purport of the Qur-ánic teaching, a comparison of which to the foregoing dispensations cannot but force us to the conclusion that the Qur-án has been a source of infinite bliss to mankind. But for this teaching, it is not possible that the faculties of man should find full development. The latent capabilities of man cannot attain actualization unless this GOSPEL OF ACTION should become the guiding principle of his life. Moreover, the powers lying dormant into human nature, when brought into play, work a surprising transformation in the world. The hidden forces of nature are thereby explored and controlled, and the rich treasures embedded in the universe are thereby unearthed. Action, and nothing but action, is the high road to the acquisition of a knowledge of the principles regulating the machinery of this universe. It is to such a man that the various forces of nature, termed angels in religious phraseology, tender submission. "He (God) taught Adam," says the Holy Qur-án, "the properties of all things, and then (the angels) all fell prostrate before him, excepting Satan."

The mighty transformation wrought in the world



## THE SECRET OF EXISTENCE

by Islam, was, in fact, the outcome of this very truth—the principle of action—which the Holy Qur-án expounded so vigorously. All the religious systems before Islam sprang, as the Holy Qur-án says, from the same Divine source, and hence brought the same GOSPEL OF ACTION. The Mosaic law, the Karma creed of the Brahmans, the teachings of Krishna in the Gita, all point to the same truth. Yet the people following these creeds failed to realize the true worth of the force of action, and gave themselves up to all sorts of polytheistic and superstitious practices.

Constituted as man is, he is prone to shirk self-exertion. He inclines to an easy-going sort of life. He is fond of coming in possession of what others have done. He shoves off his responsibilities to the shoulders of others. This weakens the power of action and tends to drive man towards doctrines such as atonement or intercession. It is just like our hankering after the golden touch-stone or the Elixir. Our object in the achievement of these things is exactly the same—shirking of labour. We want to be able to transmute therewith any base metal into gold, and thus enjoy a life of plenty, without the least exertion on our part. Our doctrines of faith, through the same ease-seeking tendency of our nature, assume similar form. Europe too was sunk, a few centuries back, in this very degradation. To-day, however, she is no longer in the grip of that curse. She has found out how to convert iron into gold. Through the alchemy of labour, she has made iron even dearer than gold. Whereas, however, the West has awakened to the worth of the alchemy of action in the sphere of matter, in the realm of religion she is still wallowing in mediæval ignorance. They still believe that in spiritual matters, though not in material, there yet exists a golden touch-stone—the blood of Jesus, mere faith in which automatically elevates the

low nature of man, purges it of all evils and gives him a passport to Heaven.

What a detrimental effect this doctrine of atonement has upon man's power of action is obvious enough. It deals a death-blow to one's sense of responsibility for his deeds, and with that saps the vital springs of motive power. Facts belie the assertion that baptism eliminates the tendency to evil, from the nature of man. On the contrary, atonement, offering security against nemesis, countenanced perpetration of sin. Hence, in respect of certain evils, Europe is leading the van. The teachings of Jesus as well as his example are not met with anywhere in the West—in the streets of Europe, in the churches of Europe, or in the diplomatic cabinets of Europe. Is there a vestige of Jesus-like life in the administrative policy of Europe, so far as the question of colour and race is concerned? Her social life, her self-indulgent ways, are also diametrically opposed to those of Jesus. In a word, Europe has nought in common with the ways of Jesus. This is all the outcome of the doctrine of atonement. Why, at all, should they bother to humbly walk with the Lord, when deeds count for little in the achievement of salvation? It was an ominous hour for Christianity when Paul laid the foundation of this doctrine, declaring law and action to be the curse of humanity. A man like Luther, too, could not avoid the pitfall. He, too, absolved man of the necessity of deeds, considering faith in the blood of the Lord as all in all. But experience has proved at last that the law and action condemned by Paul as a curse, are, in fact, the sole source of all blessings. On the other hand, his atonement has turned out to be a veritable curse for a vast portion of humanity.

What an irony of fate! The very Christian nations that do not recognize the need of law and action in affairs spiritual, have based the entire



## THE SECRET OF EXISTENCE

fabric of their society, polity and civilization on the basis of law. Is there a single Christian nation which does not rest on law? It would have been quite in the fitness of things, had they either abjured the Christian faith, according to which law is a curse, or dispensed with all their legislative machineries and their courts of justice.

The doctrine of atonement, which is the basic principle of Christian theology, and which reduces action to nought, is the main *differentia* between Christianity and Islam. Man, it is alleged, is by his very nature incapable of observing the law, and hence his power to eschew sin. Thus he renders himself liable to punishment, which cannot be evaded but through atonement. The guilt must be punished to satisfy the demand of justice. But one man cannot atone for sins of another, as all are equally sinful. Hence the necessity of a sinless one to atone for the sins of humanity. But God alone is sinless; so He came in the person of Jesus to bear the cross on behalf of a sinful humanity.

This is the gist of the Christian myth. In a word, the entire fabric of the Church faith rests on the one point, that man is incapable of fulfilling the law, which is *prima facie* absurd. If we are really so, what on earth is the justification for legislative assemblies and Governments? It is equally unwarranted to aver that the incapacity refers only to Divine Law, not to temporal law. How a line can be drawn between the two forms of law is beyond our comprehension. There can be no law for the promotion of human weal but must have its origin in some Divine law or other. Is there a single law under any Government that is not traceable to some one of the ten commandments of Moses? All these are mediæval superstitions. Whatever achievements Europe has made to-day is due solely to her power of action. What, after all, is the secret of European civilization? Scientific dis-

coveries, which are only another name for the laws of nature. In brief, the great boon which the Holy Qur-án has offered to mankind—the blessing of action—was won by the Muslims, foremost of all. They lived up to that law of nature, and made unparalleled progress. But subsequently, when they gave it up, they sank in the depth of degradation. On the other hand, Europe adopted this Islamic principle—**THE GOSPEL OF ACTION**—and attained in the sphere of matter what had been promised to Muslims in the pages of the Holy Qur-án. What a turn of fortune! The followers of the religion which made it a point to emphasize the importance of action, discarding that golden rule of life, fell into the abyss of degradation, while those with whom action was synonymous with curse adopted the Gospel of Action as inculcated by the Qur-án in their work-a-day life, and consequently reaped the fruits thereof. In a word, the Muslims accepted in practice, if not in theory, the tutelage of Paul, whereas the followers of Paul tread upon the footprints of the Great Prophet of Arabia (peace with him and the blessings of Allah).

The Christian Church divides its sacred scriptures into two distinct parts—the Old and the New Testaments. The first begins with Genesis and ends with the book of Malachi, the other comprises the portion from Matthew to Revelation. The division is supposed to be based on the two aspects of religion, with which, according to the Church creed, God has been pleased to bind up human salvation. The first phase was that of law, given to mankind through Moses. In other words, Moses received a set of laws from God, for the guidance of man, acting up to which he could attain salvation. Thus according to Mosaic dispensation salvation was bound up with ACTION. But, unfortunately, the divine experiment failed. After centuries All-Wise God discovered His blunder in demanding of man what he was by his nature



## THE SECRET OF EXISTENCE

incapable of doing—observance of Law. So the mistake was rectified and the creed of ACTION was replaced by that of GRACE. A heavy toll of sacrifice was exacted to atone for the sins of man. An innocent man was crucified, whose blood washed off human evils and brought about reconciliation between a wrathful Deity and His creatures. And God thereupon made a fresh covenant with man, saying, “Look here! Whosoever of you should have faith in the blood of Jesus and its atoning virtue, shall enjoy salvation, do whatever he might.” This was termed the NEW COVENANT. Thus the Old Covenant was that of ACTION, whereas the new one, of FAITH.

As a matter of fact, this forms the main line of demarcation between Islam and other world-faiths on the one side, and Church creed on the other. The former teach one and all that salvation can only be obtained through our own actions, while the Church offers it to mankind for nothing—just for the trouble, if it costs anything at all, of believing in the atoning efficacy of Jesus’ blood. I have purposely called it Church creed and not Christianity; for Jesus never dreamed of any such humbug. He himself was a believer in the doctrine of LAW and ACTION. In his sermon on the Mount, he lays special emphasis on observing the law. With him, man cannot find entrance to the kingdom of heaven but through his own deeds. Whenever a seeker-after-truth came to him for light, he told him to fulfil the law. For the development of spiritual powers too, he prescribed prayer, fasting and certain other deeds. ACTION, in short, was all in all with him, as with Moses. He never taught, not even through a remote hint, that one Covenant of LAW was at end giving place to that of GRACE. Never did he say that he would be crucified to atone for the sins of others, which would absolve them of the necessity of Action. His teachings, as recorded

in the Gospels, give the lie direct to all such notions.

Again, it is the height of absurdity to designate such a creed as the Covenant of Grace. A doctrine that saps all motive power, a creed that strikes a death-blow at man's sense of responsibility, that gives no impetus to his numerous capabilities, a dogma that tends to create inaction, stagnation and ultimate decay of all that is good and beautiful in the nature of man—such a creed may be anything but GRACE. Why, could there be a worse form of curse to humanity to be deprived of all the splendid modes of self-expression and achievement possible only through action?

To call it a NEW COVENANT is a similar betrayal of ignorance. There is nothing new in the Church dogmas—nothing that is not met with in the primitive forms of superstitious worships. Man committing sin, Deity flying into a fit of rage, sacrifices of all sorts offered to satiate His anger—this is an old old story, as old as man himself. Nor was Mary the first virgin that gave birth to a child. Many a virgin before her begot sons who were raised to a Divine pedestal. Greek mythology is full of such stories. The two famous Indian dynasties of old—the Chandar Bansi and the Suraj Bansi—had their origin in two virgins. A Muslim is by faith, bound to show deep veneration for the memory of Mary, the Righteous, as the Holy Qur-án calls her. Our object is simply to show that there is not a grain of novelty in all the Church conceptions; virgins giving birth to man-gods, and propitiation of enraged deities through animal or human sacrifices, and the salvation of mankind thereby, being a myth of the remotest antiquity. Why call it a NEW COVENANT passes our comprehension.

Moreover, the doctrine is open to another grave objection. The grace of the Lord is not the exclusive privilege of some particular race or religion. He is



## THE SECRET OF EXISTENCE

the Creator of all alike, and every member of His teeming creation has an equal right to His mercy. In the distribution of His blessings He is, as He ought to have been, scrupulously unbiassed. If He has been pleased to bestow equally His bounties for the physical maintenance of man, why should He be prejudiced in providing for his spiritual welfare? He can foresee the future and so He should have known that man is incapable, as the Church alleges, of observing the law. If, as Paul says, law is really a curse, why did He keep the whole world under this curse till the appearance of Jesus? Strict justice demands that the grace bestowed upon mankind at the advent of Jesus should have been awarded long long ago, at the very birth of man, to each and every nation. Adam is supposed to be the root-cause of the whole trouble. It was he that first committed sin and brought down Divine curse on his progeny. It would thus have been quite in the fitness of things that Jesus should have been raised there and then and crucified in the garden of Eden to atone for the sins of Adam. Again, every nation of the world should have witnessed the birth of a Jesus through a virgin Mary, and then crucified to wash off their sins. Divine favour must be above distinctions. Is it not an irony of fate, that for thousands of years every race, every country kept groaning under the curse of law, while only two thousand years ago a short-cut to salvation is revealed to man? Is it anything but partiality and favouritism on the part of the Divine Being, which is inconsistent with the conception of His Universal Fatherhood? Why were the former generations subjected to the painful process of *Action* and the salvation of the latter ones made so easy? Yet again, what arrangement has been made for the salvation of those who have never heard of Jesus? This may not be true to-day, the Church missionaries having penetrated into the most inaccessible parts of the world;

but only a century or so ago, there were multitudes of people to whom the NEW COVENANT, the COVENANT OF GRACE had never reached. Why condemn them to eternal perdition for no fault of their own? It was the duty of God to have duly communicated to them that He had changed His mind, that Law would henceforth be regarded as a curse, and salvation could only be had through grace.

*(To be continued.)*

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### THE SUFI'S DIARY.

MESSAGES FROM SPIRITS AND A MESSAGE FROM THE  
SUPREME SPIRIT.

TILL now I have confined myself to recording dreams in which the apparition of other persons has been the instrument of bringing a message to me. Dreams of this kind may be such as to warrant the impression that the apparitions really represented the originals; but there are dreams where the dreamer himself becomes the passive medium of a message to himself. In the foregoing pages I have purposely set down those of my dreams through which various medicines were revealed to me to cure me of bodily illness when the case had become apparently beyond aid. Most of these refer to one and the same complaint, which began in 1914, and I think now, after eight years, I am at last nearing recovery. The first of the series came to me in February 1915. At that time the nature of my ailment had not rightly been ascertained. Here, as well as in India, medical diagnosis could not do more than discover that there was something wrong in the stomach and the liver; consequently the treatment was useless. It was sometime between 1 and 2 a.m. of a February night, when I was sitting on a "prayer-mat," deep in meditation, that I fell into a trance and in my vision I saw a bottle full



## THE SUFI'S DIARY

of honey and milk in my hand, with a few powders of potassium bromide. These I mixed with the contents of the bottle and took a glass from it. Soon after I resumed my normal condition, I realized that the vision was sent to me to disclose a specific for my malady. But I reflected that as bromide tends to be enervating in its effects, the suggested mixture might injure my nerves. I made mention of this very fact in my prayer, and after a few minutes I saw a "hoary-headed durwaish" who came to me and sat on the same "prayer-mat." He told me that I was right in my apprehension, but that the mixture did contain honey and milk to act as an antidote against the ill-effects of the bromide. At that time I was on a journey. Two months after, I came home and consulted my doctor friends, requesting them to find out my trouble, having regard to the medicine revealed to me in my dream. This time it was easy to unravel what had remained a mystery till then, and the real complaint was discovered, simply through this revealed medicine. Could there be imagined an example of a vision better calculated than this to dispel the theories of thought-transference, spirit-visits, imagination, sub-consciousness, and the like? At the time of the dream I knew the properties of the bromide; but inasmuch as the complaint itself was unknown to me and I had never had so much as a hint from any medical man as to its cause, how could my sub-conscious knowledge of the drug be responsible for the vision? Similarly, if I knew that milk and honey formed an antidote to the ill-effects of the bromide, how am I to account for my uneasiness at the time? That I had to pray on this point, and that the old man came in answer to my prayer, to remove my apprehensions, clearly shows that the vision cannot be explained on materialistic grounds. The old man in the vision might be a spirit, but the first vision clearly shows that I myself was used as

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

medium by the Unseen Power for the message that came in response to my prayer. My prayers were directly to Allah. I did not invoke, and I never do invoke, the help of any spirit or angel.

We, the Muslim Sufis, believe that God hears and God speaks. His attributes are never in abeyance. If He used to speak to the seers and sages of the olden days, why should He remain silent to-day if a worshipper with real and unfeigned devotion approaches Him and lays open his heart to Him? He is all Love, and, so we are told by our holy prophet, feels more affection for His creatures than a mother does for her children. For full eighteen months I was a miserable victim to an ailment known neither to me nor to the physicians I consulted. No case could have been more helpless than mine; and if I approached Him with humility of mind, there was no reason why I should not be blessed with a word from Him.

And in this respect I want to say something to those who are interested in spirit-visits and the messages received from the ghost-land. I see no reason to doubt the veracity and honesty of purpose of my Spiritist friends, but I should like to see them engaged in higher pursuits. A message from the spirit-world is a possibility. It is the only means to strengthen our belief in the life after death, which appeals to a materialistic mind. Great good will no doubt be forthcoming if the belief becomes popular in this matter-of-fact, materialism-ridden West. But whether it contributes to the self-edification of the individual or brings any real knowledge of the sort of which we badly stand in need, it is not for me to express an opinion. On the other hand, its abuse cannot fail to cause harm, for it is a practice which excites curiosity, encourages credulity, and has opened the door to swindling in many quarters. Simple-minded people are imposed upon and put to needless and fruitless occupation and anxiety. Most of the



## THE SUFI'S DIARY

messages we have received through current Spiritism are of a very commonplace nature, and have added nothing to our treasure of knowledge. Compare it with that knowledge which has come to the world through the generations of the prophets from the Supreme Spirit. Look to those Ten Commandments revealed to Moses, and, I may say, to his predecessors in the prophethood, as recent researches establish. Are they not the genesis and basic principles of the world's manifold systems of civil and moral laws? See what splendid additions have been made to the treasure of healthy knowledge by Confucius, Zoroaster, Krishna, Buddha, Socrates and Jesus. Though the messages they brought from the Lord to mankind for its guidance have not reached us in the original purity, they still contain gems of rare worth, and still guide humanity to the path of righteousness. In this connection I may refer to the message revealed to mankind in the form of the Qur-án. All the previous messages have been collected and freed from human interpolations and systematized in a practicable form. The message not only tells us of our highest capabilities as well as our shortcomings, but also shows us ways whereby we may work out the former and guard against the latter. On the one hand we are a helpless prey to our baser passions; on the other the moral and ethical side of our nature makes us capable of soaring higher than the angels. A message is needed to free us from the tangle and put us on the path to our goal. Inaccurate and mistaken knowledge, received through divers channels, has not only marred human progress but played havoc with our higher powers. We needed a plain and straight course, and I think I may safely say that the last message of God, through the prophet of Arabia, has given it to us. The message applies itself first to the everyday trials and temptations of an average man. It deals with our animal nature. It does not suggest the curtailment of our human

cravings, but it regulates them, and under divers courses of control turns them into morality ; which being done the Qur-án prescribes yet another course to raise the moral order to a spiritual order. In short, the Qur-ánic message provides a code whereby we may sublimate our base passions into a lofty spirituality ; and it is at this stage, we are told in the same message, that many of our occult faculties manifest themselves. Our inner senses begin to stir and we move in the worlds of angels. Leaving aside the merits and demerits of any such Message from the Supreme Spirit, no one can deny the importance and necessity of the message of which I speak. If we do believe in the life after death, and also believe that many of our faculties will receive their full fruition only in the life beyond the grave, do we not badly need some message which may enable us to qualify to reap so great a harvest ?

I have read many of the messages received through spirit mediums. Curiosity may induce wonder in many, but I seldom found them, in any striking degree, edifying. I have seen a medium giving messages to scores of persons in assemblies convened for the purpose. Possibly he saw many persons there over whom a spirit was hovering. The dress and colour, and sometimes the features and age of the spirit, have been also described to us, which are often of an ordinary type and may not interest many. Then comes the message ; and to my great disappointment it has told me little or nothing.

If in our general reading we are justified in making a selection of good books because life is too short to be wasted in studying trash, would it not be wiser if we give up the pursuits of spirit-messages and spend our time in the things which are able to qualify us for holding communication with the Great Spirit ? Not only would it bring to us knowledge of the most beneficial sort, but it would also induce cleanliness



## THE SUFI'S DIARY

of life and purity of soul. What, on earth or in heaven, can we gain by attending such séances as those in which we have to sing vulgar street songs or listen to the commonplaces of an alleged spirit of an alleged soldier who, perhaps, died with a bottle of whisky in his pocket and this same song on his lips ?

In conclusion, let me return for a moment to some of the dreams I have mentioned. It must never be forgotten, as I have said, that these dreams are the very initial and primary means of receiving messages from the Great Fountain of all knowledge, and is not in any sense to be compared with that transcendental knowledge which comes to the few who, through their devotion and love for God, have received Divine blessings. To cut a long story short, I once became a victim to a disease of a very complicated nature. It was the result of mental strain, but, at the time, medical help was of no avail, seeing that the malady could not be defined. The dream message not only gave the remedy, but furnished, besides, an efficacious clue for finding the cause of the complaint. It could have brought me the required cure, but the cause of my complaint was still in existence. The medicine did good, but again the trouble assumed a new feature, and just like a medical man who changes the prescription in accordance with the course of the ailment, so every now and then the message from the Supreme Spirit prescribed a new drug. First, I am the medium of a message to myself; secondly, the message comes through a hoary-headed durwaish, then through the apparition of two doctor friends of mine, and, lastly, in the form of an English child. Leaving aside all other explanations, it has been a big struggle in my life for the last eight years. Mental strain and overwork have very often made my case hopeless, and these messages in response to my beseeching prayers, with my head on the earth and tears in my eyes, have come to my complete rescue.

*(To be continued.)*

### THE PROPHET AS A REFORMER

“THE great personalities of history flash across our vision like shooting stars in the heavens, making for their goal, through difficulties and hardships.” It is useless to try to define the secret motive power of these great personalities; we can only look at them and express our wonder.

The Semitic mind is known all over the world as the religious mind. The three great monotheistic religions of the world, namely, Islam, Judaism and Christianity, are Semitic by origin. The last two had Syria and Palestine for their birthplace, while Islam was destined to grow out of Mecca, the holy city of Arabia.

Fourteen centuries ago, the Arabs were in a state of social disintegration. While the Roman and Persian civilizations were at their highest degree of lustre and brilliancy, the social condition of the Arabs was bad. To them war was the order of the day, and the only possible source of income was the spoils of war.

Such were the conditions among the Arabs when in 571 Muhammad was born. He was the posthumous son of Abdallah, of the tribe of Quraysh. When he was six years old his mother died, and the little orphan was then adopted by his grandfather. Shortly after he also died, and Abu-Talib took charge of Muhammad.

In his twelfth year Muhammad accompanied his uncle on a trading expedition to Damascus. At the age of twenty-five he married Khadijah. During the fifteen years that followed, Muhammad distinguished himself by his good qualities, and earned the title of “Al-Amin,” the trustworthy.

The religious beliefs of his tribe did not appeal to him; he desired solitude, and so used to withdraw to a cave near Mecca, where the Divine revelation came to him, to proclaim the unity of God. Like all great



## THE PROPHET AS A REFORMER

movements, the new faith was not successful in the beginning, but in a short time it gained some adherents, and spread rapidly. Muhammad and his followers were persecuted in consequence, and had to fly to Medina for safety. He was well received there, and most of the inhabitants of Medina embraced Islam. Slowly but firmly the new faith was propagated, so that when Muhammad died in 632, Islam was the faith of the whole of the Arabian peninsula.

After the Prophet's death, Islam spread all over the ancient world: from the Atlantic to the shores of India and China, and from the Northern coasts of the Mediterranean to the Sahara desert.

What was it in Islam that made it so successful? A true Muslim has to keep the following five ordinances: The testimony that there is only one God, "Allah," and the confession that Muhammad is His Prophet; the five daily prayers; the fast of Ramadan; the Zakat, or paying  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of one's property to the poor every year; and finally, the pilgrimage, which meant visiting Mecca once in life. But, Islam is not merely rites and ceremonies. It was not these practices and rites that made it universally embraced. It was the justice and equality among its followers that made it so successful; "All are equal in Islam," according to which the leader of the Muslims, and the poorest man, were to stand and pray in the mosque side by side.

I think that much of what I have so far said about Islam is new to some. It is not as it is found in books translated by European or American scholars. Some of these writers have changed the Islamic ideas and frequently created new ones to suit their purpose. Many examples occur which show very clearly that Islam has been wrongly explained to the reading public both in America and in Europe.

The idea that Islam is an obstacle to civilization has often been presented to the reading public by

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

writers. The reason given is acceptable if it really existed. They say that Islam is an obstacle to civilization because of polygamy ; and in the presence of polygamy women cannot be respected. Polygamy does not really exist in Islam. In the Holy Qur-án there is the following passage :

Marry what seems good to you, of women by twos, or threes, or fours, but be equitable, and if ye fear that ye cannot be equitable, then marry one and only one. (Chapter of Woman, the Holy Qur-án.)

The Prophet was a man of character and perseverance. He did not give up his faith, but kept it to the end, and it was crowned with success. He was not only persevering but courageous. His assurance of the truth of his faith was so great, that he said, when his countrymen asked him to give it up : " If they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand, I would never give up the true religion of Allah."

Muhammad was a good leader as well as a marvellous reformer. He was such a great personality and had such an influence on his followers, that they were about to worship him, had he not recited to them the famous passage of the Qur-án : " And Muhammad is nothing but a prophet like those who have preceded him."

Muhammad's sayings, the Hadith, encourage the search for science and learning. He not only asked for the education of men, but also for women. He said : " Search, for learning is a duty on every Muslim boy and girl." Also : " Search for learning even in China." Again, he says : " Wisdom is the sought wish of Muslims, wherever they find it, they pick it." He felt its need so much, that he used to free prisoners of war and ask them, instead of ransom, to teach ten poor boys reading and writing.

So we see that Muhammad, his religion and his sayings, are by no means out of date as some writers say, but they are as modern as they could possibly

## CHRISTIANITY IN HER OWN LAND

be, and the more civilization advances, the more will we be able to appreciate the great services that Muhammad has rendered to the world.

ABDULLAH RAIF MASHRŪK.

(Beirut, Syria.)

## CHRISTIANITY IN HER OWN LAND

### DECLINE OF CHURCH-GOING.

To the Editor of the *Daily Express*.

SIR,—The Bishop of Norwich appears to think that people stay from church just because they have dropped the "habit" of going, as one might drop the habit of carrying a walking-stick.

I venture to think that the reason is a far deeper one than this. Numbers of people stay away because the church services are so largely out of touch with modern life and thought. Thus they teem with contradictions between fading traditions and the progress of modern knowledge.

Much of the Prayer-book is clearly archaic and needs re-modelling. When our clergy have the courage to use the blue pencil, we will resume the habit of going to church.

E. GOWERS HELLYAR.

Park-lane, Croydon.

—*Daily Express*, March 27, 1922.

### ADVERTISING CHURCH SERVICES.

There is no blinking the fact, we are too self-conscious, too inward, too reticent. Or is it, truth to tell, that we are too selfish? In any case, it is certain that our church services are not advertised so methodically and systematically as to attract general interest. Yet we wonder why our churches are all but empty. Three weeks ago, on a fine Sunday evening, in a fashionable suburb of London, one of our ministers preached to a congregation of three, including a child. Church officers would fain account for the smallness of our congregations generally in all sorts of ways, sooner than face the fact that this is mainly owing to lack of advertising enterprise. True, occasionally weather conditions, and perhaps, here and there, dullness in the pulpit, may account for a few empty seats. We submit, however, that the primary cause of sparse attendances at our church services is to be found in our general reluctance to let our light shine in the towns, cities, and suburbs where our places happen to be located. Only last Sunday evening a lady came to a London Unitarian church and told the preacher after the service that she had lived for three years within five minutes' walk, but



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

never knew that such a church existed so near. She had never attended a Unitarian service before in her life. She gave her name and address.—*The Christian Life*, March 25th.

### A VICIOUS RULE.

Intolerance has been one of the most constant features of Christian history. Creeds have changed, dogmas have been discarded, beliefs outgrown, but the intolerance of Christianity has remained constant. The one thing that impressed the old Romans when they were brought into contact with Christians was their intolerance. Christians refused to eat at the same table with non-Christians, or to take part in the amenities and duties of social life. They showed the same intolerance towards each other. Differences of belief, so minute as to be almost indiscernible to the modern eye, served as the occasion for bloody conflicts, and afterwards for the most fiendish of judicial tortures. Intolerance in religion, practically unknown in the old Roman world, was established as a ruling principle by the Christian Church. The best god for a man to have, said the Roman, is the god of his own country. The only god you may have, said the Christian, is my god; and every other was suppressed as a militant State suppresses an armed invader. This principle took so firm a hold on the Christian conscience that even to-day differences of religion are not discussed as are differences on other subjects. Dispute the Christian's religion, and how often does it happen that all that is bad in his nature rises to the surface. He will asperse your character, impugn your motive, ruin you in business, drive you out of public life, imprison you if he can, boycott you if he can't, or if it is impossible to punish you in this world, will express the hope that your punishment is only deferred till you get "beyond the veil." And he will all the time assert—perhaps feel—that he is acting under the impulse of the loftiest morality. In other matters there is at least a chance that a man may stand face to face with his worst passions, and that their repulsiveness may effect a cure. In religion they are obscured, cloaked by a training that is older than any living individual, hidden under plausible motives, ready with a traitor's stab delivered under shelter of a flag of truce.—F.T.

## HOLY ANECDOTES

### The Sermon on the Camel—Universal Brotherhood of Man

"This day have I perfected for you your religion and exhausted my blessings on you."—THE HOLY QUR-ÁN, v. 3.

THE tenth year A.H. finds every nook and corner of the island of Arabia illumined with the rays of

## HOLY ANECDOTES

Islam. Idolatry, superstition, moral and social corruptions have disappeared, yielding place to a higher order of things. Falsehood has vanished and Truth triumphed. Devotion to Allah reigns supreme. Erstwhile enemies have transformed into warm friends. In a word, a wholesale metamorphosis has swept over the length and breadth of Arabia.

The pilgrimage time arriving, the Prophet sets out for Mecca. Never since his exile has he been able to fulfil this religious obligation. This is his first as well as his last pilgrimage to the Ka'ba. Multitudes of people from all parts of the island have flocked to this historic annual gathering. The very place which was once the scene of the Prophet's utter helplessness, where he was discarded and rejected while communicating his message from tent to tent, on pilgrimage occasions, is now one vast sea of humanity, full of devotion to him. As many as 124,000 tongues join him in the glorification of the Lord, as he chants the usual hymn of submission and praise to him :

O Lord ! Here we are at Thy service.

O Lord ! There is no associate to Thee.

O Lord ! Here we are at Thy service.

All praise to Thee, O Lord, and all blessings from Thee,

All kingdom is Thine, O Lord ; there is no associate to Thee.

The Prophet's tent, made of a blanket, is set up on the plain known as 'Arafat. In the afternoon, he mounts on his camel, Qaswâ, to proclaim his *Last Message* to mankind. The mission of his life on earth has been fulfilled, and he delivers his farewell word to humanity on that unique occasion, summing up in a nutshell, so to speak, the purport of religion and the object of his life-long labour—the establishment of a *Universal Brotherhood of Man* under the *Universal Fatherhood of One God*.

The spiritual as well as temporal over-lord of the whole of Arabia, seated on a throne no better than his camel's back, with the azure vault of heaven for

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

his only canopy, thus proclaims to the teeming masses all around him, the fundamental equality of man and man, demolishing at a single stroke all the artificial barriers of birth, caste, colour or creed :

The Arab has no superiority over the 'Ajmi (non-Arab) nor has the 'Ajmi any superiority over the Arab. You are all equally the children of Adam, and Adam sprang from the dust.

Sex-distinction is also abolished. The fair sex is raised to a footing of perfect equality with the male :

In your treatment of women, you must beware of Allah. You have certain rights over women, so have they certain rights over you.

The slave is not merely emancipated but cemented in a bond of genuine fraternal regard to the master :

As to your slaves, let them partake of the food that you take and wear what you wear.

Even if a negro slave with a bored nose were placed in authority over you, you shall thoroughly submit to him and obey him, so long as he leads you in accordance with Book of God.

Then, addressing the assembly, he asks :

What day is it ? Is it not the day of sacrifice ? What month is it ? Is it not the sacred month ? What place is this ? Is it not the sacred town ?

The people replying each time in the affirmative, he proceeds :

Then your bloods, your properties, your honour shall be as sacred to one another, as this day, this month and this town are sacred.

Beware ! Do not be misguided after me, so as to strike off one another's neck. You will have to meet your Lord, Who will call you to account for your deeds.

After certain other exhortations he goes on to observe :

Verily, Satan has despaired of entertaining any hope as to the re-establishment of his worship in your town. You must, however, be on your guard, not to follow him even in trifles, which, should you do, would please him.



## TOPICS OF MUSLIM INTEREST

Worship your Lord! Keep up your prayers five times a day! Keep fast for a month! Obey what I have told you and enter your Lord's heaven.

Having thus laid the foundation-stone of a *Universal Brotherhood of Man*, having adopted every safeguard against mutual bloodshed and enjoined a virtuous life devoted to the worship of the Lord, he concludes his memorable sermon with the words:

Have I acquitted myself of delivering the message of the Lord?

"Yes! admirably," shout the myriad human throats.

"O Lord, bear witness!" continues the Prophet, raising his head towards heaven, and then turning to the people, he adds:

Let those present here carry the message to those absent.

Thus is delivered the *Final Message* of the Great Prophet of Arabia to the human race, and a seal of confirmation is put thereto by the Divine revelation he receives there and then, while yet on the camel's back:

This day have I perfected for you your religion and exhausted my blessings on you.

BABAR.

## TOPICS OF MUSLIM INTEREST

### What They Think of Us!

[The following extracts which we give in our pages for the information of our readers should not be taken in all cases to represent our views.—Ed.]

#### LORD READING'S MESSAGE

MOSLEM GRIEVANCES.

DESERTION OF ISLAM.

By LORD MESTON, K.C.S.I.

(Formerly Finance Minister for Governor-General's Council, India.)

Apart from the ethics of its publication, there is nothing obscure about Lord Reading's telegram on the Turkish situation.

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

It is a perfectly clear statement of the demands of the extreme section of the Indian Moslems; in other words, it quotes the price they ask for detaching themselves from the revolutionary tactics of Mr. Gandhi and his Hindu associates. All recent information from India suggests that the non-co-operation campaign is only kept alive by its employment of the fiery spirits who are conducting what is known as the Khilafat agitation. Let that unnatural alliance be dissolved and the task of dealing with the Hindu irreconcilables would be substantially lightened. From this point of view a settlement with the Turkish nationalists is eminently desirable as a contribution to peace in India. Whether it is worth the price Lord Reading proposes is a question which must be decided by His Majesty's Government on broader considerations even than the susceptibilities of the Indian Moslems, however important a factor these may be in the problem.

### ISLAM'S BEST FRIEND.

It is well, nevertheless, that we should try to understand what the Mohammedan feeling is, and how steadily it has been embittered in recent years. For there are sixty millions to be counted with, much bigotry, great ignorance, and a readiness to blaze into sudden passion when their religion is touched. Loyalty was their watchword for many years after the government of India was taken over by the Crown. Based partly on the hope of protection, not to say preference, from us as against the vastly greater and more adaptable Hindu population, it was even more largely due to our traditional amity with Turkey and the memories of the Crimea. If they could not be ruled by a Sultan of their own faith, they were at least proud of their allegiance to a great Christian Power which was known to be Islam's best friend.

Secure in that feeling, they were hardly touched by the pan-Islamic intrigues to which Abdul Hamid lent his powerful patronage. Even the excitement caused by the rise of the Young Turk party was easily controlled; and it was not till the Italian adventure in Tripoli that the barometer began to fall. Then came the Balkan wars and the degradation of Turkey. And simultaneously there was much high-handedness by Russia in Persia, including one particular act of brutality which no Mohammedan will ever forgive or forget.

### LOYALTY UNREWARDED.

At first the symptoms of change among our Indian Mussulmans were a sense of their own ineffectiveness, and the sullen resentment which such a feeling is bound to engender. Their co-religionists were being trampled upon in every part of the world, and they could do nothing to help. Even in India their loyalty was going unrewarded, and the Hindus were snatching everything—wealth, power, and political concessions. There was

## TOPICS OF MUSLIM INTEREST

no "place in the sun" for the poor Mohammedans. So they argued, and their restlessness grew, and their leaders determined to abandon their aloofness from politics and to join the Hindus in agitating for Home Rule.

But through all this, there persisted the belief that Great Britain had never joined any conspiracy on the part of Christian Powers to humiliate Islam. It was this belief which carried us through the war. No true Mohammedan but was sore at heart to see Turkey ranged among our enemies; but they hugged the conviction that, when war was over, all would be forgiven and our old friendship would be restored. "It is no pleasure to us," said a venerable Shiah priest to the writer, "to hear of Moslem blood being shed on the sacred soil of Irak; but we endure it because Turkey must suffer for her folly, and England will be, we know, as merciful as powerful."

### THE BREAKING POINT.

With peace, however, the real trouble started. The Indian Mussulman, thoroughly familiar with the politics of Mecca, was never happy about our dealings with the Shereef, whom he regarded as a faithless rebel; and he was equally suspicious of our policy in Mesopotamia. But the storm burst when the secret Treaty assigning Constantinople to Russia was disclosed and the partition of Thrace was announced.

Thenceforward everything went wrong. To our other enemies we had been generous, to Turkey vindictive. Instead of peace there was spoliation; in place of friendship, humiliation. We had set up a puppet government in Constantinople in order to extort from it a degrading peace. We had ignored the real national heart at Angora; and, to crown our infamy, we had hounded on Greece to attempt its destruction. The veil was off, and we had come out in our true colours as Christian fanatics, eager for the downfall of Islam.

This is the poison with which the Ali brothers and their lieutenants have been inoculating the credulous masses of the Indian Moslems. It has been spread by the Khilafat propaganda, ostensibly a movement in favour of restoring to the Sultan of Turkey such temporal power as will support him in maintaining his spiritual headship of the Mohammedan religion. It has saturated a great community with disaffection which gravely augments our present anxieties in India; and the fact, whatever we may think of the causes, must be reckoned with in the forthcoming Paris negotiations.

### POSSIBLE COMPROMISES AND CONCESSIONS.

But the remedy does not lie in enunciating terms which are impossible, and which the extremists who dictated them know and intend to be impossible. We cannot hand back Jerusalem to the Sultan, or impose him as suzerain on King Husain of the



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

Hajaz or King Faizul of Baghdad, or perpetuate Turkish misrule over subject races. In other respects, however, there are compromises and concessions to sentiment which would be interpreted as friendly acts; and all that is wanted to conciliate the more sensible Indian Moslems—and they form the great majority—is that we should evince a practical readiness to resume our old position as Turkey's friend and mentor. After that the remedy lies in India itself. The Mussulmans of that country must be led gradually to regard themselves as citizens of India, and not of some vague intangible pan-Islamic world. This is one of our first and greatest tasks under the new constitution, and without our aid it seems impossible of achievement.—*Sunday Times*, March 12, 1922.

### TURKEY AND THE HOLY PLACES

#### VAGUE NOTIONS OF INDIAN MOSLEMS.

In view of the Government of India's appeal for a revision of the Sèvres Treaty, I have been discussing the problem with leading Mohammedans, and find the most incorrect and the vaguest ideas prevalent in the highest quarters. I have been assured that Turkey has been deprived in the recent war of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia, and that Baghdad and Adrianople are peculiarly holy cities.

My interlocutors were almost incredulous of my reminder that the only basis for these statements was that the Powers had sought to create an Armenia at Turkey's expense, but had hitherto failed, and the only existing autonomous Armenia was in former Russian territory. I cannot remember that Enver Pasha even in 1913 ever based his claim to Adrianople, despite its famous mosque, on its sanctity. The Holy places are generally referred to in the Arabic dual (*haramain*), and are Mecca and Medina.

Nevertheless the depth of feeling, however uninformed, in regard to Turkey is considerable, and if the first and third points in the Government's telegram can be satisfied the Indian Moslem world will be greatly gratified.

In regard to the suzerainty of the Holy Places, Indian opinion does not face the difficulties. The initial error in countenancing Arab propaganda against the Caliph cannot be righted by Christian Powers' taking the other side in a purely Islamic religious quarrel. If the Powers recognize the Turkish Sultan's suzerainty, and Abd el Aziz es Saud, the Sultan of Nejd, thereafter, as is easily conceivable, were to occupy Medina or Mecca, what action would the Powers take against the Wahabis? They have occupied Mecca before and might well do so again.

The point, however, which escaped attention is that the Government of India by this telegram and its previous pronouncements has virtually recognized the Sultan's Caliphate

## TOPICS OF MUSLIM INTEREST

on behalf of Indian Moslems. Why should not this be done in a solemn official manner without further international complications? The Sultan, after all, only reigns as Caliph in the hearts of the faithful.—*The Times*, March 13, 1922.

### LORD READING'S BLUNDER

#### A SHAMEFUL SURRENDER.

The Government of India, having already earned the contempt of its enemies in the East, has turned to the gaining of a similar position in the regard of its friends in the West. The step which it has taken in publicly prescribing for the Imperial Cabinet a revision of the Turkish Treaty is the most abject proof which has yet been given of the timid subservience to disorderly forces which has disgraced its administration.

The demand which Indian Moslems present, and which Lord Reading obsequiously endorses, is, in plain terms, the restoration of that Mohammedan right to massacre, of which Turkey has always been the leading exponent. We are asked to hand back to the Turk those localities in Thrace, Palestine, and Arabia where his rule has been, as elsewhere, a defiance to every precept of humanity and civilization. We are to pay blackmail to Ottoman savagery in order that the Government of India may be saved the trouble of doing its duty.

We hope the response of the Home Government will be a recommendation to the authorities at Delhi to keep their teeth from chattering and to face disorder in the spirit which Englishmen expect in their representatives. By trying to meet savage and unscrupulous malignity with soft words they have brought India to the very verge of anarchy. By shirking the first responsibilities of any Government they have undermined the confidence of a vast population and destroyed the long and patient work of braver men. They now seek to transfer to the shoulders of others the onus of their own feeble-minded and feeble-hearted record.

This disgraceful despatch ought to be promptly answered by a sweeping change in the personnel of those who are entrusted with the welfare of India and with the good name of England.—*The Pall Mall Gazette*, March 9, 1922.

### THE PREMIER AND MOSLEMS

Asked for a statement yesterday, before his departure for Wales, Mr. Lloyd George said to Reuter's representative:

"We have been keeping the balance quite fairly between the Turks and Greeks, and want a real peace in that part of the world. The publication of a document of this sort makes it difficult to negotiate a satisfactory peace.

"As for Moslem opinion in India, we have always paid every

## ISLAMIC REVIEW

regard to it. It has had great influence in the determination of our policy throughout, and we have paid great deference to the part Moslems took in the Great War.

"They are fully entitled to express their opinion, and have a right to expect that we will consider it as an element in the determination of our policy."

Last night's Court Circular states that Mr. Montagu was received in audience by the King yesterday morning and delivered up the Seals of Office as Secretary of State for India.—*Daily News*, March 11, 1922.

We beg to acknowledge the following donations up to the 11th April, which were received in response to our appeal made in "The Woking Mission Letter":—

	£	s.	d.
Mr. E. Lawrence, London .. ..	1	2	0
Mr. A. M. Belshah .. ..	0	10	0
Mr. M. Hassan, Manchester .. ..	0	10	0
Lady Ali Baig, Bristol .. ..	1	1	0
Mr. C. R. Blake, Charlotte .. ..	0	11	7
Mr. B. Daud Shah, Mosque, Woking ..	1	0	0
Mr. F. K. Khan, Trinidad .. ..	0	10	0
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Gift from a young Natalian .. ..	2	0	0
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Mr. Jamal Din, Negri Sembilan, F.M.S. ..	0	10	0
Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, Mosque, Woking ..	1	0	0
Dr. M. A. Ansari, Sub-Assistant Surgeon, Burma Railways .. ..	6	5	0
Mr. A. R. M. Zabir, Colombo .. ..	1	1	0
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## WHAT IS ISLAM ?

## WHAT IS ISLAM ?

[The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teaching. For further details please write to the Imam of the Mosque, Woking.]

**ISLAM, THE RELIGION OF PEACE.**—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission; as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

**OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.**—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus to maintain peace between man and man.

**THE PROPHETS OF ISLAM.**—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, i.e. the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's prophets, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

**THE QUR-ÁN.**—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, but, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-án, the last Book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

**ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.**—These are seven in number: belief in (1) Allah; (2) angels; (3) books from God; (4) messengers from God; (5) the hereafter; (6) the measurement of good and evil; (7) resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state, in this life.

The sixth article of faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

**PILLARS OF ISLAM.**—These are five in number: (1) declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad; (2) prayer; (3) fasting; (4) almsgiving; (5) pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of Mecca.

**ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.**—The Muslims worship one God—the Almighty, the All-knowing, the All-just, the Cherisher of all the



## ISLAMIC REVIEW

Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the heaven and the earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

**FAITH AND ACTION.**—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith is of itself insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden, and none can expiate for another's sin.

**ETHICS IN ISLAM.**—"Imbue yourself with Divine attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

**CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.**—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels and leading him to the border of Divinity.

**THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.**—Men and women come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainment. Islam places man and woman under like obligations, the one to the other.

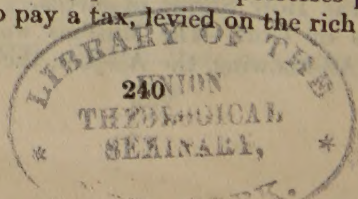
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